

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

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A SERIES OF LESSONS TO HELP CHILDREN OF GOD UNDERSTAND
WHY BAD THINGS IN LIFE COME THEIR WAY

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Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

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Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 1

Introduction To The Series

TEXT: Psalm 73:1-28 1 <<A Psalm of Asaph.>> Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

- 2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.
- 3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.
- 5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
- 6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.
- 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
- 8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.
- 9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.
- 10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.
- 11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?
- 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.
- 13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.
- 14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.
- 15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.
- 16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;
- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.
- 18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.
- 19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.
- 20 As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.
- 21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.
- 22 So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.
- 23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.
- 24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.
- 25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
- 26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.
- 27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
- 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the oldest questions to come to the mind of mankind is “Why do bad things happen to good people?” The Book of Job is believed to be the oldest book of the Bible. This question is raised in that book. Job’s friends seemed to be of the opinion that bad things do not happen to good people; therefore, they proceeded to accuse Job of doing very bad things. They told Job that the things that he was experiencing were the judgment of God because of his sins. But, of course, we who have read the Book of Job know they were wrong as are the majority of people today.

The writer of Psalm 73 struggled with the same question. As he observed life, he saw good people suffering and evil people seemingly getting along just fine. His observations caused him pain, 73:16-17. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

I. THE DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING THESE THINGS.

We are finite and God is infinite. Isaiah 55:8, 9 *8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Sometimes, there are differences in the definition of what is good and bad. We too often see things from our limited perspective and not from God's perspective.

We often do not distinguish between God's action and Satan's action. A striking example is found in the man Job. We sometimes think that God's permitting bad things to happen means that God is either unfair or He does not care.

There is the tendency to accept the good and to expect God to make sure that only good comes our way, Job 2:9-10. *9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.* When bad things happen, our tendency is to listen to Satan's accusation that God is not doing what is right and that God is being unfair.

We often do not understand the purpose of the event, and we want an answer right now rather than waiting on the Lord. Just because it does not make sense, our sin nature in the flesh automatically causes us to think the worst of God, Genesis 37: 50:19-21.

We sometimes have difficulty in trusting God with our lives. Can we really trust God Who gave His only begotten Son to save us to do what is good and right for us? Genesis 18:23-25; *23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? 25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

1 Kings 8:56. *Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*

II. EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE.

✚ The death of Abel. 1 John 3:12 *Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

✚ Job.

✚ The ill treatment of Joseph.

1. By his brothers. Genesis 37
2. By Potiphar's wife. Genesis 39.
3. By the king's cupbearer. Genesis 40.

✚ The death of Uriah. 2 Samuel 11:

✚ The death of David's infant son. 2 Samuel 12:15-23

✚ The three Hebrew children. Daniel 3:

✚ Daniel. Daniel 6

✚ The death of many babies by Herod's order after the birth of Jesus. Matthew 2:13-18

✚ The beheading of John the Baptist. Matthew 14:1-12

✚ The suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

✚ The beating of the apostles. Acts 5

✚ The stoning of Stephen. Acts 7:54-60

✚ The beating of Paul and Silas. Acts 16:14-40

CONCLUSION:

The writer of Psalms 73 went to the house of the LORD and there learned from God those things that helped him understand.

The Psalmist was convicted that he was wrong for thinking that God was unfair. Psalms 73:21-22 21 *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. 22 So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*

Upon receiving understanding from the LORD, he confessed his weakness and received strength from the LORD. Psalms 73:26-28 26 *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. 27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.*

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 2

The Problem Of Sin

TEXT: *Genesis 3:1-21 1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the oldest questions to come to the mind of mankind is “Why do bad things happen to good people?” It has been a very difficult question for many people to deal with.

In introducing this series, the difficulty of understanding these things was discussed. Some things which make it difficult to understand why bad things happen to good people are:

1. We are finite and God is infinite.
2. Sometimes there are differences in the definition of what is good and bad. Too often, we see things from our limited perspective and not from God's all-encompassing perspective.
3. We often do not distinguish between God's action and Satan's action.
4. There is a tendency to accept the good and to expect God to make sure that only good comes to us.
5. When bad things happen, we tend to listen to Satan's accusation that God is not doing what is right and that God is not being fair.
6. We sometimes do not understand the purpose of the event and we want an answer right NOW rather than waiting on the LORD. Just because our present circumstance is perceived to be a bad thing and does not make sense now, our sin nature in the flesh automatically causes us to think the worst of God.
7. In this Lesson, Lesson 2, let us look at the problem of sin as one reason why bad things happen to good people.

I. SIN MAKES US SUSCEPTIBLE TO BAD THINGS.

The origin of sin

The scriptures trace the origin of sin to Satan. Genesis tells us how sin entered into the world. The Bible relates the long history of the evil and bad things brought about by sin. It sets forth Jesus Christ as the divine remedy for sin necessitated by the guilty act of man and by the nature of man that is unrenewed is itself sin.

Apart from Scripture, there is no understanding of the horror, shame, evil and impact of sin. Non-Christian moralists largely treat sin as ignorance, misfortune, and weakness but rarely as guilt. The human remedy for man's problems is culture of the mind and body. In the irony of history, the world was never so vile as when pagan culture was at its peak.

Definitions of sin

1. Sin is action against or failure to act in accord with the will of God, Romans 3:23. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* This can be in the mind or can be accompanied by some outward act, Matthew 5:27-28; *27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* Acts 5:3. *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*
2. Sin is a nature, Romans 5:19, *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Men do not become sinners by sinning – they sin because they are sinners from birth. Even in the believer, the sin nature is still active but can be controlled by the greater power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Sin is a state of being, Romans 3:9 *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;* Galatians 3:22 *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* God has declared the whole human race – Jew and Gentile – to be in the state of complete absence of righteousness, without merit and utterly condemned; therefore, man is susceptible to bad things happening to him as related to his state of total depravity.

II. SIN OFTEN INFLUENCES OUR DECISIONS AND CAUSES BAD THINGS TO HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE.

When sin influences our decisions, bad things happen.

When Satan influenced the decision of Adam and Eve, they lost their purity and their home in the Garden of Eden.

1. They began to know sorrow, Genesis 3:16 *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*
2. They began to experience difficulty in providing food for themselves because Adam's decision brought the curse upon the ground, Genesis 3:17-19, *17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Sin influenced Lot's decision and bad things happened.

Lot chose to live in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 13:5-13. Note carefully verses 11

13. 11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

Lot was vexed by the conduct of the wicked, 2 Peter 2:6-8. *6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)*

The word “vex” in verse 7 means “to wear down by hard labor, to get worn out.” The word “vex” in verse 8 means “to torture, afflict with pain.” Lot lost his home, his wife, his possessions, his wealth, and his daughters disgraced him.

Sin influenced some of David’s decisions and bad things happened. He chose to commit adultery with Bathsheba and bad things happened. He chose to kill Bathsheba’s husband and then chose to attempt a cover up the murder and bad things happened, 2 Samuel 11-12.

He chose to be influenced by sin and bad things happened. His baby son died. His daughter was raped by another son. His son was killed. Another son led a civil war against David in an attempt to kill him.

He chose to number the people of Israel after having been told not to do so and bad things happened, 2 Samuel 24. As a result, 70,000 men died.

III. SINS OF OTHERS CAUSE BAD THINGS TO HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE.

The sin of Cain caused Abel to be murdered, Genesis 4; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:11-12 *11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

The sin of Joseph’s brothers caused him to be sold as a slave, Genesis 37.

The sin of the high priest, the Sadducees and the Sanhedrin caused the Apostles to suffer, Acts 5:17-42. Carefully note the Apostles’ reaction to the sins of others as recorded in verses 38-42.

The sins of some religious people caused Stephen to be stoned to death, Acts 6:8-7:60.

The sins of parents in disobedience to God sometimes cause the children to suffer, Exodus 20:4-6 *4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

Idolatry, adultery, and other acts of sin by parents will sometimes impact their children with bad things happening to good people.

CONCLUSION:

The problem of sin is one reason bad things happen to good people, but it is not the only reason why bad things happen to good people.

Sin is the root cause of bad choices and decisions that others and we make.

Sin blinds the mind, blurs the vision, and seeks to block the making of right decisions. Our thoughts and decisions determine our actions.

Sin influences those we often consider to be good people to reject Jesus Christ as Saviour and to remain lost.

Sin sometimes influences the decisions of believers concerning baptism, church membership, service, and commitment to God through the church thereby robbing us of blessings and fellowship.

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 3

The Purpose Of God

TEXT: Genesis 37:12-28 *12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.*

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

INTRODUCTION:

The question “Why do bad things happen to good people” has troubled people for centuries. It is still a troubling question. Because this question is so difficult to understand, Satan often uses it to cause us to question God’s love and goodness.

The account of Joseph being sold as a slave by his brothers is an account of a bad thing happening to a good person. The question naturally arises, “Why did this happen to Joseph?” Why did God

permit this to happen to Joseph who was only 17 year of age, Genesis 37:2?

In Lesson 2, we learned that bad things sometimes happen to good people because of sin whether it is because of their own sin or because of the sins of other. Whichever the case, bad things happen to good people because of sin.

In this lesson, no sin is mentioned as the cause of this bad experience happening to Joseph. A careful study of Joseph's life will show that God allowed it because of His Divine purpose for Joseph as well as for the brothers selling him and for his father.

I. THE PREPARATION OF JOSEPH.

The prophecy, Genesis 37:7, 9. *7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

The problem with the brothers

Intense hatred for Joseph, Genesis 37:4-5. *4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. 5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

Extreme envy of Joseph, Genesis 37:8, 11. *8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.*

The perplexing accusation by Potiphar's wife, Genesis 39:1-3, 7-20.

Although Joseph did not understand why he was sold by his brothers, he still trusted God and followed God's standard for living, Genesis 39:1-3, 8-9. *1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. 2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.*

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; 9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

The false accusation resulted in Joseph being put into prison; but even there, God blessed him, Genesis 39:21-23. *21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.*

This prison experience served as a valuable preparation for Joseph in fulfilling the purpose of God.

From envy to hatred, from being sold to be a slave to false imprisonment because of a false accusation by a wicked woman, Joseph, like Job, maintained his integrity before God.

Although he did not understand why these things happened, Joseph trusted God and God blessed him while he was imprisoned.

While Joseph was in prison, two of Pharaoh's servants were also imprisoned. While confined, the servants dreamed dreams they did not understand. Joseph told them that interpretation of dreams belongs to God, Genesis 40:7-8, 20-22.

The Prime Minister of Egypt, Genesis 41.

Look at Joseph's rise from slavery to Prime Minister.

- a. Joseph was sold as a slave when he was 17 years old, Genesis 37:2.
- b. When he was 30 years old (after interpreting the dreams of the two servants), he was called before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams, Genesis 41:46.
- c. As with the two imprisoned servants, Joseph did not take credit for being able to interpret dreams by declaring that interpretation of dreams belongs to God, Genesis 41:14-16.
- d. Pharaoh told his dreams to Joseph and Joseph responded by telling Pharaoh that God had given him the dream to show what He (God) was about to do, Genesis 41:25, 28, 32. After Joseph interpreted the dream, he was exalted to the position of Prime Minister of Egypt.

Look at the events that happened to Joseph over a 13-year period.

- a. He was sold as a slave by his brothers.
- b. He lost the fellowship and love of his family.
- c. He was imprisoned because of false accusation.
- d. He was forgotten by Pharaoh's chief butler.

Note carefully that none of the bad things happening to him resulted because of anything Joseph had done. Sometimes bad things happen to good people in order that the purpose of God will be fulfilled. All the while bad things were happening to Joseph, God never stopped blessing.

- a. God blessed Joseph in Potiphar's house.

- b. God blessed Joseph in prison.
- c. God blessed Joseph with the position of Prime Minister of Egypt.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT FOR JACOB.

Reaping what he sowed

Deception. He deceived his father and father-in-law and reaped deception, Genesis 37:31-34.

Partiality. The object of his love was taken from him. It was not wrong for Jacob to love Joseph; but he ought to have loved the other sons as well, Genesis 37:3-4.

Provision for his family in a time of famine.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT FOR THE BROTHERS.

Pride and envy dealt with.

Their pride and envy, Genesis 37:8, 11.

Their humility.

- a. Bowing before Joseph, Genesis 42:6, 21-23.
- b. Asking for forgiveness 30 years after having sold Joseph into slavery, Genesis 50:15-17.

Proof that they could not defeat the purpose of God, Genesis 37:6-11, 18-20.

III. THE PURPOSE OF GOD. Genesis 50:19-21.

To prepare Joseph for special service.

To provide for the children of Israel.

CONCLUSION:

When bad things happen, we often do not know the purpose behind them immediately.

The main thing to remember is to keep trusting and obeying God, even though we do not understand the reason. God knows all things and He knows what lies ahead for us.

It is possible to keep trusting and serving God even when bad things happen.

The purpose of the event may be different for different people.

Joseph trusted God in his difficult time and God blessed him all the way.

Can you trust God to do what is right even though you cannot understand the reason right NOW?

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 4

The Permission Of God

TEXT: Job 1:1-21 *1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and

worshipped,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

INTRODUCTION: There are many things that make it difficult to understand why bad things happen to good people. One such thing is the failure to distinguish between the actions of God and the actions of Satan.

The loss of a child is very difficult for many to deal with. Two questions often come to mind. They are “Why did God do this” and “Why did God let it happen?”

In the lesson text, Job experienced the death of, not just one child, but of ten children. He also lost his wealth in the same day. It is clear from the text that God did not cause the death of Job’s children; but He did allow it. The question before us is “Why did God permit Satan to do this to Job?”

I. GOD’S ASSESSMENT OF JOB.

Job 1:1, 5, 8; Job 13:15 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

Job’s personal relationship with God.

1. He was a perfect and upright man. Job 1:1, 8
2. He feared and revered God.
3. He avoided evil and followed the standards of God.
4. He was unique in that there was none other like him in the earth. Job 1:8

Job’s practice of a godly lifestyle.

1. He worshipped God. Job 1:5, 20-21
2. He prayed continually for his children. Job 1:5
3. He trusted God. Job 1:20-21; 13:15

II. SATAN’S ACUSATION OF JOB.

Concerning Job's motive for service. Job 1:8-12

1. The reason for service – protection, blessings, personal gain. Job 1:9-10
2. The reaction to the removal of protection and blessing. Job 1:11

NOTE: Satan believes that the children of God only serve Him for what blessings they receive from Him. He believes that if believers do not see or experience blessings, they will not serve God. He is right about many people. Many go to church and sing God's praises while things are going well; but when difficulty comes, they say God is unfair and quit going to church and do not live for God.

Concerning Job's reaction to the loss of death of his children and loss of his wealth, Job 2:3-6. *3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

1. The reason for Job not cursing God is found in Job 2:4.
2. The reaction of Job to his bad health is found in Job 2:5.

NOTE: Satan believed that Job was selfish and was only serving God for what he received in return, Job 1:10-11. He also believed that Job was so selfish that he would give up everything for his own health and personal well-being.

III. JOB'S REACTION TO HIS LOSSES.

The loss of children and wealth, Job 1:20-22.

1. He grieved, Job 1:20a; 2:13. *Job 2:13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*
2. He worshipped God, Job 1:20b-21.
3. He sinned not nor charged God foolishly, Job 1:22.

The loss of health, Job 2:7-8. *7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

1. He made an effort to clean his sores.
2. He wished he had not been born, Job 3:

3. He wondered why he did not die as an infant.

The loss of his wife's support, Job 2:9-10. *9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

1. He rebuked his wife, Job 2:10a.
2. He sinned not with his lips, Job 2:10b.

The consummation of his losses.

1. Grieved, Job 6:1-3. *1 But Job answered and said, 2 Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! 3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.*
2. Confused, expressed his lack of understanding why those things happened.
3. Confident, expressed his confidence in God, Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:13-16, 19:23-27; 23:10-12. From the beginning of bad things happening to the ending, Job never ceased to hold confidence in God.

CONCLUSION:

Someone has well said, "Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us; but God tests us to bring out the best." The principle that Joseph stated about his brothers motive for what they did to him can be said about Satan's motive for what he did to Job, Genesis 50:20a; 1 Corinthians 10:13.

God knew Job and his commitment. God permitted those bad things to happen to Job.

1. God demonstrated that some of His children worship and serve Him because they both love and trust Him.
2. God knew that Job's example would comfort and encourage other believers.
3. Job showed us that when we do not know or understand why things are happening as they are, we should keep on trusting God who does.

Job was sure of his relationship with God and was sure that he would live with Him, Job 19:25-27.

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be

consumed within me.

Do you have this kind of assurance in your heart?

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 5

Persecution For God's Sake

TEXT: John 15:18-21 *18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

INTRODUCTION:

On April 20, 1999, gunshots were fired at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Two high school shooters opened fire on classmates and staff leaving a trail of 13 dead and many more injured. Cassie Bernall was reading her Bible when the shooting began. She and another student got under a table. It was reported that when one of the killers found Cassie hiding, he asked her, "Do you believe in God?" The report stated that Cassie said, "Yes, I do believe in God." Then she was shot and killed.

Another student who was killed was Rachel Scott. She was sitting outside the cafeteria with Richard Castaldo. The killers sprayed the two with bullets. It was reported that one of the killers reached down and grabbed Rachel by her hair and shouted, "Do you still believe in your God?" She answered, "You know that I do." He reportedly replied, "Then go and be with Him now!" Putting the gun to her temple, he fired. Rachel died instantly.

Yet another student, Valeen Schnurr, was hit by multiple bullets. She cried out from the pain, "Oh my God, oh my God!" Her cries caught the attention of the killers. "God?" one of the gunmen taunted her. "Do you really believe in God?" Looking up at the gunman, she told him, "Yes, I believe in God." "Why?" he asked, pausing to reload his gun. Valeen said, "My parents brought me up that way, and I believe." For some unexplained reason, the gunman turned and walked away, and she survived. (Information taken from *The Martyr's touch* by Bruce Porter.

In the days after that tragic day, many asked, “Why did this happen?” “Why did God let this happen to these good students?” In this lesson, we will note that one reason bad things happen to good people is persecution for God’s sake.

I. THE PREDICTION.

By Jesus Christ. John 15:18-21; 16:1-3; 32-33 *1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

1. Because of hatred for Jesus Christ. John 15:18

2. Because believers are not of this world. John 15:19

3. Because the world persecuted Jesus. John 15:20; Matthew 24:9; Luke 21:12-13

Matthew 24:9 *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

Luke 21:12 *But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.*

13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

4. Because the world does not know God the Father nor Jesus Christ. John 15:21; John 15:13

5. Because of blessings that await the persecuted. Matthew 5:11-12; John 16:32-33; Matthew 5:11 *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

John 16:32 *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

By the Apostle Paul. 2 Timothy 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

By the Apostle Peter. 1 Peter 4:12-16 *12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

II. PERSON'S PERSECUTED.

Peter and John. Acts 4. Questioned and threatened.

The Apostles. Acts 5. Arrested, imprisoned, beaten, ordered not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released.

Stephen. Acts 6-7. Arrested, tried, stoned to death.

James and Peter. Acts 12. James killed. Peter imprisoned.

The Apostle Paul. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. *23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

On August 7, 1999, Valeen Schnurr spoke of her experience at a Youth Rally in Littleton. Here is a part of what she said: "...Only when I look back at the events that took place that day do I see Columbine at the mercy of a spiritual war. So many battles took place that day: the battle between good and evil, my personal battle to fight to stay alive after being shot numerous times, and also, the fight to stand for what I believe, even if it meant to die for it...To this day I always wonder why they left me alone. I should be dead. But I know that God has me here for a reason today. Even though this chapter of this war has been fought, there is yet another fight to be won, and every one of you guys are going to be fighting when you go back to school this month." *The Martyr's Touch* by Bruce Porter. pp 8-9

Darrell Scott, the father of Rachel Scott, made the following observation in an interview with Julia Zaher for Decision Today Radio Magazine, aired August 12, 1999. Here is a part of what he said: "I had a cameraman ask me: 'Where was God when your daughter was killed?' And I just prayed for wisdom in answering. And my answer was: He was at the same place that His Son was when He was killed 2000 years ago. But He was also at the same place that my son was in the library when he was miraculously protected.

"I have no question: that God purposed my daughter's life to be taken that day. And that's very hard for people to hear. But I believe that, because she was prepared for it..."

"I think as Christians we all generally agree that God is in control, that He's omniscient, that He is omnipresent, that He's all powerful, all knowing. But then when a tragedy

occurs, we want to excuse Him and we want to basically blame it on guns, or blame it on people, or blame it on the devil. And no one ever sees God's hand in the middle of the tragedy as well." *The Martyr's Touch* by Bruce Porter, pp 50- 51.

CONCLUSION:

How do you respond when people say bad things about you and to you?

Jesus predicted that believers would suffer persecution for His sake and for the sake of God the Father. It was true in the early church. It has been true down through the ages. It is true today.

Do you know Jesus as your personal Saviour?

Do you love Him enough to live for Him? Do you love Him enough to suffer for Him?

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 6

The Provision Of God

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 *1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

INTRODUCTION:

We have learned from the Bible and from experience that bad things will come to us at some times in our lives. It is not a question if they will come but rather when they will come. We have noted several reasons why bad things happen to good people. They may come as the result of our sins, the sins of others, the work of Satan, for the glory of God, or persecution.

When bad things come, how will we respond? When bad things come our way, how will God respond?

I. RESPONSES.

Negative responses.

1. Anger and bitterness toward God.
2. Turning away from God.
 - a. Quit serving God.
 - b. Quit praying and attending worship services.
 - c. Begin serving self and Satan.
3. Blame others and become bitter toward them.

Positive responses.

1. Repentance, if sin is the cause.

Psalms 51:1-19; 1 <<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.>> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

2. Forgiveness if sins of others are the cause.

3. Prayer for strength and help if other reasons are the cause.

2 Corinthians 12:8 *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

4. Trust God to do the work He desires to do for and through us.

2 Corinthians 12:7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

Psalms 37:3-5 *3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Proverbs 3:5-6; *5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Isaiah 50:10; *Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.*

Isaiah 26:3; *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Jeremiah 15:5, 7 *5 For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?*

7 And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways.

5. Wait on God to work out His plan in our lives.

Isaiah 40:28-31; *28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Psalms 63:1-5; *1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

Psalms 37:7-8; *7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

Lamentations 3:25-26 *25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.*

26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.

II. PROVISION BY GOD.

His sufficient grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

2 Corinthians 9:8; *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

Philippians 4:13; *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

1 Timothy 1:14 *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

His promises.

1. Brighter days.

Psalms 30:5 *For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

2. Deliverance.

Psalms 34:19-20 *19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.*

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

3. Hear prayers.

Psalms 34:17; *The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

Mark 11:24 *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

4. His presence.

Matthew 28:20; *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Hebrews 13:5-6; *5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Psalms 23:1-4 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5. Good things from evil things.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10; 15-18; 12:7 *7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:15-18 *15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 12:7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

6. A way to escape in times of temptation.

1 Corinthians 4:7-10; *7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

Hebrews 2:18 *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

7. Victory over the devil.

James 4:6-10 *6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

CONCLUSION:

God provides mercy and grace for the lost, the unbeliever, to give them salvation from sin and to give eternal life.

God's sufficient grace and promises to provide what each person needs when bad things come our way.

Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

Lesson 7

The Passion Of Jesus Christ

TEXT: Luke 22:39-46; *39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.*

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Matthew 27:39-46 *39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,*

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

INTRODUCTION:

When bad things happen to good people, they sometimes believe Satan's lies that God is unfair or God doesn't care. But often, people fail to remember the things that happened to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus can sympathize and empathize with everyone who goes through any difficulty, Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:13-15. *2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

The cry of Jesus Christ from the cross expresses a very human emotion, Matthew 27:46. *46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

I. THE PERSONAL CHARACTER HE EXHIBITED.

Begotten by the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:18-25 *18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Virgin Born. Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Luke 1:31, 34 *31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.*

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Knew no sin. John 8:45-46; *45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.*

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

II Corinthians 5:21; *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

1 Peter 2:21-22; *21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Hebrews 4:15; 7:26 *4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

II. THE PERSECUTION HE EXPERIENCED.

Tempted by Satan. Matthew 4:1-11 *1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

*9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

Persecuted for speaking the truth. Luke 4:28-29; *28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,
29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.*

John 7:1; 10:39 *7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.
10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,*

Persecuted for healing on the Sabbath. John 5:14-16 *14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.
15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.
16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.*

Persecuted because the people rejected the Word. John 8:37 *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*

III. THE PAIN HE ENDURED.

In the Garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22:39-44 *39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.
40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.
41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,
42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.
43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

From the soldiers. Luke 22:64-65; *64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?*
65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Matthew 27:27-30; *27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.*
28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.
29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!
30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

John 19:1-4 *1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.*
2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,
3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.
4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

On the cross. Psalms 22:1; *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

Matthew 27:46; *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Mark 15:34 *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

IV. THE PARDON HE ENSURED.

Micah 7:18 *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*

Mediator between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

Man's substitute. Isaiah 53:12; *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Hebrews 2:9; 9:27-28 *2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Made a sacrifice for sinners. Galatians 1:4; *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

Ephesians 5:2; *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

Titus 2:14; *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Ephesians 1:3-7 *3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

CONCLUSION:

Jesus Christ was the sinless Son of God. Yet, He experienced bad things. He fully understands how we feel when we are tested or persecuted. Through His suffering, He has purchased the plan of salvation. This plan of salvation is available to all, and He will save all who believe. Jesus is able to help every believer who is experiencing bad things. Cast your cares upon Him for he does care for you.

Closing Thoughts

It is quite natural for a human being to ask questions when something bad happens. Most of the time it is completely beyond the human understanding. For those outside of Jesus Christ, it may be a thing that will bring great despair. For the child of God, it may be a thing of despair, but comfort can come because of the realization that God is still in control and knows all. It is not a question of whether bad things will come but when will they come. Since this is the case, we must make sure that we place our trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is definitely in control. Nothing happens without His knowledge and permission.

I hope that this booklet has been of help to you in your coping with the bad things that come your way. It is my prayer that is has. To help you to learn easier, a workbook is next. You will find the answers for the blanks in the corresponding text.

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